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Kidney trouble preys upon the mind, discourages and lessens ambition; beauty, vigor and cheerfulness soon disappear when the kidneys are out of order or diseased.

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## For Beast



## LOVE AND A CASTNET.

By F. H. LANCASTER.

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His castnet! Paul surveyed it proudly as it hung in the falling light. Fully eight feet long, close-meshed and leaded. Woven of the strongest sea-land with a bag that would hold a hundred mullet. How many hours of patient toil it represented, only Paul Joffrien knew. Hours made up of minutes snatched from a fisherman's over-crowded life. Stitch by stitch while the other boys rested at dinner or smoked cigarettes in the soft afterglow or snored before the blazing pine-knot fire. So had the castnet grown. Sometimes the broad shoulders bent to their task and ached from the strain of the day's labor; very often the tired fingers had cramped with weariness, but the lad's stubborn will had never faltered.

The day he had brought home his store of twine, the sea-land accounted the best of its kind, and whittled out the soft-pine needle. Ah, that had been a proud day. With that day had begun the thoughts that kept him awake and working, while others slept. "Sometimes catch plenty, sometimes mebbe not catch any. Say, mek it even, say catch fifty mullet every night. Two mullet for five cents. Das twenty-five time five cents. Das five quarters. Say mek one dollar and a quarter every day. Say it costs me a quarter a day to leave—bust das, with tobacco. Das leave me six dollar a vik. Trea bon. I buy him!"

The "him" so joyously referred to being a little two-roomed cabin, nestled upon a point that ran out into the gulf. It was owned by a crabbed old fisherman who insisted that the house and its half-dozen sandy acres was worth fifty dollars, because "she done fenced on 'free side already." Fenced by the blue waters of the Mexican Gulf! Everybody said that the price was preposterous; the cabin was on the verge of dilapidation; forty dollars was enough and to spare. But Paul was resolved to have it, even, as he told himself under his breath, "even if I have to goove forty-five dollars for it!"

And why? All because a certain dark-eyed daughter of the "old man" had praised the spot.

She was a pretty girl, was Marguerite, and her pet name of Bébé seemed comically out of keeping with her high head and flashing eyes. The "old man" was proud of his daughter and skillfully kept the young men at a distance. Not but what they were welcome to his house, very welcome. So welcome that he talked to them himself—all the time. Never for a moment deserting his self-appointed task.

"I thought I'd meet him out, me," one of the boys reported. "I stay till dark, yas. Late. But das old man, he wouldn't even go feed his horse, No."

Paul was not one of the boys who had tried to outbid the "old man" on the old man's front gallery. He had a bolder plan,—when his castnet was done and—

And at last it was done and from thence forward every moonless night when the tide was in Paul might have been found waist deep in the water listening for the ruffle of the mullet. The strong cord of his net noosed around his left wrist, a lead between his strong front teeth. Over his right arm the folds of net carefully gathered for spreading. Instantly, at the ruffle of an oncoming school the alert figure rose higher and bent backward in unison with the backward swing of the trained right arm, gathering force for the throw. The arm swooped forward and the body with it; the lead flies from between his teeth; the net from his arm. Ah, how beautifully it spreads and sinks over that school of mullet. Truly a prince of castnets. Slowly he draws in the line on his left wrist. His



Paul surveyed it proudly as it hung in the falling light.

heart thrills at the weight. "Heavy, sho! Mebbe a hundred. Feel laik it."

But he cannot investigate his gains out here. With the heavy wet net and its catch on his shoulders he wades sturdily back to the beach. Eh, bien! It is well, indeed, that his shoulders are broad and his chest deep.

So the night wore to morning and he was glad, cleaning his fish and selling them,—and sleeping like the dead through the afternoon.

Then there were the nights that were light, very beautiful, with a silvery beauty, but very bad for the

fisher who fished with a castnet. The next day Paul would walk the beach with no fish to sell, blue as though he had had a college education and was bothered over the "social problems" and politics.

Weeks when he met his payments; weeks when he was short and his creditor sour; at last in March the Sunday came when he could stride into church with a piece of paper in his breast pocket and in his breast the sensation of a man who owned the earth. As the congregation came straggling down the grassy path he turned and said carelessly over his shoulder to the boy who walked with Bébé:

"Well, I buy das point place, me." "Sho," ejaculated the youth, "How much you goeve for him?"

"Oh, I dunno. Feerty-five dollars, mebbe."

"Sho!" The boy gave place mechanically, and Paul walked beside



Told Her About His Castnet—and His Love.

Bébé with the air of a man enjoying his rights.

Bébé eyed her wealthy suitor with carefully concealed admiration. "Das nice place you got," she remarked collectedly.

"Yas, right nice,—when I got him fixed up. Roof laik some. I'll split some boards next vik. Mek fence, too!" Then under the inspiration of her openly expressed interest, Paul reached for hitherto undreamed of heights.

"I tink mebbe I paint him some day. What color you tink look nice?"

Bébé rose to the emergency with an exalting sense of power. Yellow. Did not M. Paul think yellow a very pretty color. Out certainly! M. Paul thought yellow the prettiest color in the world,—for a house. So they waxed quickly confidential and walked so close together that when the "old man" saw them coming up the slope he said things under his breath that it was not proper to say on a Sunday evening.

Where was madam, his wife and trusted ally. What could she be thinking of! He brought the front legs of his chair down upon the floor with a bang that jarred his teeth and strode to meet that absorbed couple.

"Bonjour, M. Paul."

"Bonjour, M. Zenon."

They reached the gallery before either spoke again and Bébé quickly disappeared. For all his boldness, Paul's hand shook as he rolled and lighted a cigarette, but the thought of his castnet steadied his nerves.

"I tink I come see Bébé," he announced quietly.

The "old man" snorted with astonished indignation.

"Sho!"

"Yas."

There was a pause while the indignant parent gathered his sarcastic powers for withering work. Then—

"What you got to kip a wife?"

Ah, ha! Paul's hour of triumph had come very quietly. He tossed away the stump of his cigarette, nipped his mustache and arose to thrust his hands into his pocket.

"I got a castnet, me," he said with subdued exultation. "She's eight feet long and made of sea-land." He gave the old man a moment to take it all in and added, "I bought das point place last vik. Das deed all right!"

For a long moment the old man stared at the unfolded paper with a reverence for the written word known only to the illiterate. Then the crying need of action came over him and he lunged heavily into the inner room.

"Bebe, oh, Bebe! What for you don't hurry with das coffee, cheré?"

When the coffee-drinking was concluded the "old man" went away submissively to feed his horse and madam carried her cigarette to the kitchen steps.

Paul and Bébé sat side by side in their hide-bottom chairs, and as they watched the moon come sailing up over the wide, wide Gulf he told her about his castnet,—and his love.

New York in Farming Business.  
The city of New York does a little in the agricultural line occasionally. Thus \$182.20 has been received from the net proceeds of an auction sale of apples held on the new Croton dam division of the new aqueduct. It has been transmitted to the city chamberlain for the credit of the water fund.

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